

American Museum of Natural History

Our Dynamic Planet

Rock Candy Experiment - Crystals you can eat!

Melted rock—called lava—erupts from volcanoes. When lava cools, it grows crystals, repeating patterns of geometric shapes. Grow your own crystals and taste the sweet rewards.

Tips

- Before you start, read the whole experiment.
- Have an adult help you when you use the stove. Be careful!
- Be patient. After all, growing crystals in rocks can take thousands of years. Rock candy crystals only take a few days.

What You Need

- 1 pencil
- 1 piece of string
- 1 tall glass
- 3 cups of sugar
- 1 large paper clip

What To Do

1. Tie the string to the pencil and paper clip (see picture).
2. Pour 2 cups of sugar and 1 cup of water into a saucepan. Over medium heat, stir until sugar disappears. Add 1 more cup of sugar, a little at a time. Stir until clear. Turn off heat. Cool for 25 minutes. Pour mixture into glass and place pencil on top.
3. Cool for 12 hours.

4. Remove pencil and string and place to the side. Reheat the sugar mixture in a pan and stir until sugar is dissolved. Cool for 25 minutes. Pour mixture into clean glass. Cool for 12 hours.

5. Repeat Step #4. Take string off pencil, cut off paper clip and enjoy!